

IRTS Radio News Bulletin Sunday June 19th 2005

Historic Events

Thursday last was a historic day in amateur radio in EI in that it marked the first Theory Examination for the Experimenter Licence run under the new system. Under this system, negotiated recently by the IRTS with ComReg, the Society is responsible for the setting, organising and correcting of the Theory Examination. Thursday also marked the last examination to be held using the traditional essay type examination paper. For the future the examination will consist of a multiple-choice paper of 60 questions covering the various aspects of the HAREC syllabus. A question bank for these papers has already been prepared by the Society. Fourteen candidates sat the examination, which was held in the offices of ComReg in Dublin. Under the agreement negotiated by IRTS, ComReg has undertaken to provide facilities in Dublin in January and June of each year, free of charge, to facilitate the holding of examinations. Examinations can be held at centres elsewhere in the country if numbers warrant it.

The agreement negotiated by the Society with ComReg is a historic one and puts the running of the Theory Examination on a proper footing. It also vests the trust and confidence of ComReg in the Society, which adds further to its status as the representative Society for Radio Experimenters in this country.

Examinations will be held on a regular basis as required and clubs can plan their classes with the certainty of the availability of an examination.

CW Field Day

The CW Field Day, which was held over the June bank holiday weekend, attracted five portable entries this year. The weather was mixed and propagation conditions were good. Last years restricted section winners, the Shannon Basin Radio Club, defended their title from their usual location in Ballinasloe and were using their newly refurbished club caravan for the first time. They reported a good turnout of members and an improved score. They used the callsign EI3Z/P.

Cork Radio Club operating as EI1C/P set up their caravan at the Old Head of Kinsale but problems with their generator forced them to abandon the operation after a few hours when the batteries went flat.

Joe EI5GE/P operated from near Bansha in County Tipperary as a single operator and

first time entrant in the field day. He enjoyed the experience and we look forward to hearing him again in future outings.

EI7M/P was active from Athboy in County Meath and operated from the same big field as Joe EI7GY/P. Thanks to Stephen EI9HC who organised the venue and the hospitality.

The next field day is the VHF/UHF one to be held in two weeks time. Please advise the Contest Manager if you intend to participate.

SSB Field Day will be held on the weekend of September the 3rd and 4th. Now is the time for clubs and groups to be putting the plans in place. A central venue will be used if there is sufficient interest but stations will still be welcome to set up independently if they wish. It only takes two or three people to get up and running in the restricted section, so get that tent or caravan and generator organised now.

Packet News

TIPBBS is still quite active and links with EI3RCW in Waterford have been improved of late as has the CAHIR Node. Although WRC2 is running on Mt. Leinster and is a very good signal to TIP, there is no real activity, the node gives the TIP21/TIPBBS a rather false reliability of just 10 which may be putting some off trying the link but this is being looked at as the error is in the parameters with the true reliability being more in the line of 190.

Since the crash early in the year the BBS has had a complete Re-Vamp, although much of the available files have been lost, there are still quite a few handy tips and other bits of data if you simply send the W command followed by W (Directory) this will give the contents of the requested directory and is a function that many simply do not use even if users realise it is available.

Packet radio doesn't suffer the virus, pop-ups and scanners etc. that plague the internet so why not give the packet a try? It's free and contents and connections are all Virus free as well.

VHF News

On June the 10th last, another Sporadic E opening occurred involving many EI stations from IO51, IO52, and IO62 squares on 2 metres. Stations in Italy were delighted with the range of Irish squares available. Es have occurred on 144 MHz on 6 days so far this season. This is the peak time for Sporadic E. 50 MHz is open for long

periods to Europe, shorter openings to US and Canada usually occur in late June and early July in the evenings on 6 metres.

International Lighthouse/Lightship Weekend

At the time of writing, already 151 stations in 31 countries have confirmed their participation in the International Lighthouse/Lightship Weekend which will take place on the 20th and 21st of August 2005. A list of the stations with QTH and QSL information can be found at illw.net/2005_list.htm.

If you are joining in the fun of the weekend please listen out for other lighthouse or lightship stations. Non-US CW stations should operate above 14.225 MHz to allow access by Advanced Class US amateurs. Operations below 14.225 MHz just eliminate the potential for some US hams to work the LH stations. Last year there were 376 lighthouse and lightship stations QRV during the weekend. So come and join us in the fun of the weekend and make a total of over 400 lighthouse/ship stations. An entry form can be found on the web page at illw.net.

Mayo Radio Experimenters Network

The Mayo Radio Experimenters Network has announced the date for the 2005 rally. Rally director Padraic Baynes EI9JA told the June meeting of the group that the rally would be held on Sunday November 20 at the usual venue, the Belmont Hotel, Knock.

Bookings for accommodation should be made directly with the hotel. The rate is 50 Euro per person with a special all-in rate of 70 Euro for B&B and evening meal.

The rally will follow the highly successful format of previous years, and will commence at 11.00 a.m. Right of admission is reserved. Traders should contact Padraic Baynes EI9JA for exhibition space. More details will be announced later.

Cork Repeater Group

The Cork Repeater Group is at present in the process of upgrading both the 2 metre and 70 centimetre repeaters, and wishes to apologise for the interruption of service, it is hoped to have both back in full service soon.

South Eastern Amateur Radio Group

The June General meeting on Wednesday the 29th will be an informal get-together. This is also an ideal opportunity to renew or apply for membership. Remember, all membership subs for 2005 must be paid on or before the 30th of June.

Squares Table 2005

Inputs for the 2005 Squares Table is slow so far this year as 6 meter DX conditions are very poor compared to previous years. Anyone working DX on any of the VHF/UHF bands please forward their totals for inclusion on this table. The table will be published in Echo Ireland, scores will be updated on EI7GL's web page www.qsl.net/ei7gl as they come to hand. Thanks to John for including the table on his homepage over the years.

Solar News

Between January 15th and 19th last a giant sunspot materialised on the Sun's surface and quickly became very active. Known as Sunspot 720, this phenomenon produced four powerful solar flares. When it exploded for the fifth time on January the 20th, observers were not surprised. However, they should have been. Researchers now realise that the January 20th blast was unusual. It has shaken the very foundations of space weather theory and, possibly, changed the way astronauts are going to operate when they return to the Moon. Sunspot 720 unleashed a new kind of solar storm.

Just minutes after the flare, a swarm of high-speed protons surrounded Earth and the Moon. Thirty minutes later, the most intense proton storm since the 1950s was underway. Proton storms usually can take days to develop after a Solar Flare but this one began in mere minutes.

Proton storms cause all kinds of problems. They dramatically change the behaviour of propagation on the HF bands. They can also disrupt the operation of satellites and more dangerously they can penetrate the skin of space suits and make astronauts feel the effects of radiation sickness.

Rockall Island

A team of 11 which includes rock climbers, two radio amateurs, a photographer & a doctor set sail from the Orkney Islands on June 11th aboard the converted trawler MV Invincible arriving at Rockall a few days later, their aim is to attempt a landing from an inflatable dingy. Information is available at www.rockallisland.co.uk

Items for inclusion in next weeks Radio News should be forwarded to Mark EI7IS at QTHR or by phone to 087-6302026. Items for the radio news can also be faxed to 087-5-6302026. News should be submitted via e-mail to news@irts.ie for automatic forwarding to both the radio and printed news services. Please note that items for the radio news should reach the editor no later than midday on Fridays.

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